

testament to what this country is, what it can be, and what will be. As heroes, they will be honored. As individuals, they will be missed, mourned, and remembered as the true embodiment of our great American spirit.

In addition to the immediate victims of the bombing, we have also recognized the law enforcement officials, the emergency rescue personnel, and the countless volunteers who rushed to our aid in our moment of crisis. The proposed memorial's acknowledgment of not only the victims, but the others involved in the rescue process, was artfully done to remind all of us that we are part of a nation that cares and responds to those in need.

The establishment of the memorial is not only appropriate but an important tool for teaching future generations of Americans what we are all about—coming together. It is also a reminder to us that the price of our freedom is eternal vigilance against those who would rob us of our sense of security through acts of terrorism.

Throughout the entire legislative process, I was pleased to note the extent of involvement by the survivors and the families of those who tragically lost their lives, as well as the larger community. This type of cooperation is not only indicative of how Oklahomans get things done, but will result in a Memorial that is aesthetically designed and truly meaningful to all those who will visit the site for generations to come.

In closing, I would like to thank my colleagues for recognizing the importance of this legislation and giving it their immediate attention. We can all be proud we will now have a suitable memorial to honor the lives of the men, women, and children killed in the bombing.

Mr. FAIRCLOTH addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. NICKLES. Will the Senator withhold for a moment?

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Excuse me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If the Senator will withhold. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I would like to make sure we have taken final action on S. 871.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We have taken final action.

Mr. NICKLES. I thank my colleague from North Carolina for his patience, as well as my colleague from Indiana for setting aside some time to pass this legislation. This is very important legislation to the people of Oklahoma and I think to our country as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. I thank the Senator from Oklahoma, and I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. FAIRCLOTH pertaining to the introduction of S. 1219

are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, with the permission of the Senator from Indiana, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business. I will take a couple minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. I thank the Chair and the Senator from Indiana, Senator COATS.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN RUSSIA

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I wanted to come to the Senate floor this morning and talk about a development in Russia that is of concern to this body because of the action we took earlier this summer.

Earlier in the year the Russian Duma passed a law which would reintegrate a Stalinist system when it comes to freedom of conscience, freedom of religion. Four religions: Judaism, Buddhism, the Russian Orthodox Church, and Islam were identified as sanctioned by the Russian Federation, but left out all Protestant religions, the Catholic religion, and any other minority faith that is currently operating there according to international treaty and according to Russian law, previous Russian law and the Russian Constitution.

These new groups would be treated in minority fashion, in that they could not own property, they could not operate schools, have missionaries there, publish Bibles or distribute them or employ people. They would be required to get rid of bank accounts and to register with the state. What I am describing is a huge setback for Russia, back into Stalinist times. And so, this body took very courageous action. It voted 95 to 4 to withhold foreign aid to Russia, should this be enacted. I was delighted after we did that, that President Boris Yeltsin was good to his word and vetoed that legislation. After that, however, he participated in a compromise bill, which an honest reading would tell a person is of no difference.

The upper house of the Duma, yesterday, passed compromise legislation. The President is expected to sign it, and unfortunately, the worst things that could happen to religion in Russia could still happen. There is reason to believe that the Russian Government will implement this law differently than it is actually written. It is for this reason that I have worked with Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, and other members of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, to modify our bill in a small, but significant way. The word "enact" will be changed in conference to "implement" in order to give the Russian leaders some latitude in interpreting this legislation. The foreign operations bill language will now allow the Russian Government 6 months to enact the new legislation in a manner that will not discriminate against minority religions before a decision is made to withhold foreign aid.

I come to the floor today to plead with my colleagues to support this language. I would tell you that the people we represent would not be amused by our inaction or our unwillingness to do something. This isn't about trade, this isn't about freedom of contract, this is about taking tax dollars from the American people and giving them to a government that is reimposing Stalinist restrictions. Imagine going to a townhall in your State, or mine in Oregon, and talking to Catholics who are watching the spectacle of their church being removed from Russia—and then trying to explain why Russia should get American tax dollars as foreign aid.

I thank the Chair for this time. I thank my colleague again from Indiana. I yield back the balance of my time.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 1156, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1156) making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Coats amendment No. 1249, to provide scholarship assistance for District of Columbia elementary and secondary school students.

Wyden amendment No. 1250, to establish that it is the standing order of the Senate that a Senator who objects to a motion or matter shall disclose the objection in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

AMENDMENT NO. 1249

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the consideration of amendment No. 1249 with the time until 5 p.m. equally divided and controlled in the usual form.

Mr. COATS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, we will now for about the next 5 hours be discussing an issue that I believe is important to every Member of the U.S. Senate and important to this country and important to the future of education.

The amendment is titled the "District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship" amendment. It is being offered by myself and Senator LIEBERMAN from Connecticut. We will be presenting the case for this amendment to our colleagues who we trust they will be listening carefully to what is said, and I think the important debate that will ensue as a result of our offering this amendment.

The amendment is fairly basic. It provides opportunity scholarships for children in grades K through 12 for District of Columbia residents whose family incomes are below 185 percent of the